ISSN: 2658-8455
Volume 2, Issue 6 (2021), pp.140-155.
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IJAFAME
International Journal of Accounting, Finance, Auditing, Management & Economics

The role of social capital in the financial accompaniment of SMEs: A literature review

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Disclosure Statement :	Authors are not aware of any findings that might be perceived as affecting the objectivity of this study
Conflict of Interest :	The authors report no conflicts of interest.
Cite this article	Boumlik, Z., Oulhadj, B., & Karim, K. (2021). The role of social capital in the financial accompaniment of SMEs: A literature review . International Journal of Accounting, Finance, Auditing, Management and Economics, 2(6), 140-155. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5528979
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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.5528979
Received: September 01, 2021 **Published online:** October 01, 2021

ISSN: 2658-8455
Volume 2, Issue 6 (2021), pp.140-155.
www.ijafame.org

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Abstract:

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play an important and crucial role in both developed and developing countries. They contribute significantly to economic growth through employment opportunities, productivity, entrepreneurial improvements, and innovative solutions. Indeed, the role of SMEs is well recognized as an engine of socio-economic development. However, these special entities are increasingly facing problems and constraints in accessing financial resources that hinder their growth and development. The problem of financing of these SMEs is mainly due to their characteristics, which include opacity, information asymmetry and financial fragility. Indeed, the characteristics of small and medium enterprises have been widely recognized in literature as weaknesses and obstacles that reduce and limit their ability to access to external resources.

In the current context, small and medium enterprises are increasingly trying to design and develop new strategies and skills in order to gain access to the financial resources. In this respect, a large and growing body of literature focused on social capital development strategies as one of the alternative solutions. Indeed, the relational skills and social capital of managers are fast becoming a key factor that increases SMEs' access to the resources inherent in the social networks to which they belong.

The present article is a theoretical review that aims to provide an overview on key concepts and shine new light on the potential impact of managers' social capital on the financial accompaniment of small and medium-sized enterprises. Also, we proposed a conceptual model based on a theoretical framework that draws its origins from the foundations and contributions of the social capital theory and recent empirical works.

Keywords: Social capital, SMEs, Networks, Financial accompaniment
JEL Classification: M10
Paper type: Theoretical Research

Résumé

Les petites et moyennes entreprises (PME) jouent un rôle important et crucial tant dans les pays développés que dans les pays en développement. Elles contribuent de manière significative à la croissance économique grâce aux opportunités d'emploi, à la productivité, aux améliorations entrepreneuriales et aux solutions innovantes. En effet, le rôle des PME est bien reconnu comme un moteur du développement socio-économique. Cependant, ces entités spéciales sont de plus en plus confrontées à des problèmes et des contraintes d'accès aux ressources financières qui entravent leur croissance et leur développement. Le problème de financement de ces PME est principalement dû à leurs caractéristiques, qui comprennent l'opacité, l'asymétrie d'information et la fragilité financière. En effet, les caractéristiques des petites et moyennes entreprises ont été largement reconnues dans la littérature comme des faiblesses et des obstacles qui réduisent et limitent leur capacité d'accès aux ressources externes.

Dans le contexte actuel, les petites et moyennes entreprises tentent de plus en plus de concevoir et de développer de nouvelles stratégies et compétences afin d'accéder aux ressources financières. À cet égard, une littérature importante et croissante s'est concentrée sur les stratégies de développement du capital social comme l'une des solutions alternatives. En effet, les compétences relationnelles et le capital social des managers sont devenus un facteur clé qui favorise l'accès des PME aux ressources inhérentes aux réseaux sociaux auxquels elles appartiennent.

Le présent article est une revue théorique qui vise à fournir une vue d'ensemble des concepts clés et à apporter un nouvel éclairage sur l'impact potentiel du capital social des managers sur l'accompagnement financier des petites et moyennes entreprises. Aussi, nous avons proposé un modèle conceptuel basé sur un cadre théorique qui puise ses origines dans les fondements et les apports de la théorie du capital social et des travaux empiriques récents.

Mots-clés : capital social, PME, réseaux, accompagnement financier
JEL Classification : M10
Type de papier : Recherche théorique

1. Introduction

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) play a very important role in both developed and developing countries (Makhroute, M. & al., 2013). They contribute considerably to the economic growth by providing employment, entrepreneurial improvements, innovative solutions, etc. (Yildirim D, 2015).

However, SMEs are facing a lot of barriers that limit their development and financial strength (Hachimi A, et al., 2017). They often have difficulties in financing their investments. Opposite to large companies, SMEs have modest resources and they are informationally opaque. This fact explains the rationing behaviour of banks towards the financing of this entity (Psyllaki, 1995; In Hachimi A, et al., 2017). Thus, we assume that information asymmetry that characterizes the relation between the SMEs and the external stakeholders especially banks and financing companies is the main constraint facing the financing of these companies.

In order to manage to survive in this context, SMEs start developing some competencies that could remedy to their financing problems. In this article, we attempt to analyse the potential contribution of the manager's social capital to the financing of the SMEs. Social capital is widely discussed in fields such as sociology, economics, and anthropology, but it has been accorded only limited attention in finance (Ferris, P. S. & al., 2016).

Social capital includes the resources acquired through relationships, associations, networks such as confidence, the logic of coordination, cooperation and mutual benefits (Chou, 2006). Some authors assume that social capital is a solution to the financing constraint that face SMEs (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; In Henrui E, & Niyonsaba S. 2014). Therefore, we attempt to analyse this relationship. To do so, we will seek to establish answers to the main research questions below:

Q1: what are the factors that explain the difficulty of access to financing for SMEs?
Q2: What are the dimensions of social capital?
Q3: How does social capital contribute to the financing of small and medium-sized enterprises?

The article's objective is to investigate the problems that are facing SMEs in the process of financing their investments, we also attempt to discuss the reasons behind the financial rationing behaviour adopted by the banking system. Our paper is also devoted to the study of the relationship between the manager's social capital and the access of the SMEs to the financial resources.

The present paper is a review of the literature that proposes a conceptual framework for analyzing the potential contribution of social capital to the financial accompaniment of SMEs which is based on the analysis of recent related works.

Thus, the structure of our article is as follows: first, we'll present a theoretical analysis of our key variables which are social capital, SME, and the financing of these SME. Then, we'll present the state of art and we'll proceed to the analysis of the potential relationship between social capital and financing of SMEs through reviewing related works. Finally, we'll present our conceptual model and discuss our theoretical results.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Social Capital

The concept of "social capital" has attracted recently an increasing interest in research in management sciences. There is an agreement on its meaning, "social capital consists of networks of relationships and resources inherent in these networks" (Bourdieu 1986, Coleman 1988). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) followed this standard conception and considers social capital as a "*sum of actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by individuals*. (P. 243)". This definition

ISSN: 2658-8455
Volume 2, Issue 6 (2021), pp.140-155.
www.ijafame.org

includes two principal elements of social capital which are resources and network of relationships. Specifically, they considered that relationships in a network constitute a potential source of resources that actors can access and exploit for achieving advantages. In this perception, Portes (1998) stipulates that social capital is the ability of actors to obtain benefits from their social networks (In Ziqi Gao, et al., 2019).

Furthermore, researchers consider that social capital consists in the resources that are embedded in formal and informal relationships and in the actor's social networks which influence positively the firm's competitiveness (Burt, 1992; Coleman, 1988; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). In the same orientation, Birtley (1985) affirms that social networks especially informal relationships could play an important role in firm's access to resources. Indeed, social capital facilitates information exchange and knowledge transfer (Florin, Lubatkin, & Schulze, 2003; Hite, 2005). It can contribute to the financial performance of companies and reduce the transaction costs (Du J. & al., 2015) and the agency costs.

In a context in which information constitute a source of competitive advantage, social capital can be exploited in order to access to knowledge and it allows the companies to capitalize on collective learning. (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). In developing economies, institutional environment is still modest and cannot provide firms the necessary support and accompaniment (Zhang &Wong, 2008). Thus, firms start developing social capital building strategies in order to find support and to access to resources from external economic actors (Le & Nguyen, 2009; Li, Chen, Liu, & Peng, 2012).

In literature, the framework common admitted of the social capital is composed of three dimensions which are structural dimension, cognitive dimension and relational dimension (Claridge, T. 2018; Granovetter, 1992; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; Zhao & al. 2011; Tsui & al., 1992). The distinction between these three dimensions of social capital was established by Nahapiet, J. and Ghoshal, S. (1998) and it constitutes now the framework that is most commonly utilized and accepted for the analysis of social capital (Claridge, T. 2018). The table below shows the distinctions between social capital's dimensions:

***Table 1**: Distinction between social capital dimensions*

Structural	**Cognitive**	**relational**
Social structure	**Shared understandings**	**Nature and quality of relationships**
• Network ties and configuration • Roles, rules, precedents, and procedures	• Shared language, codes, and narratives • Shared values, attitudes, and beliefs	• Trust and trustworthiness • Norms and sanctions • Obligations and expectations • Identity and identification

Source: *adapted from (Claridge, T. 2018).*

2.1.1. The structural dimension of social capital

The structural dimension of social capital focuses on the specificities of the social system and the network of relationships (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). It's interested in the configuration of the links connecting the different actors in a network or a group. This configuration consists of the following characteristics: the roles of the actors, the rules, the social norms, etc. (Uphoff and Wijayaratna 2000; In Claridge, T. 2018).

Indeed, structural social capital is tangible and can be observed more clearly than the other social capital dimensions (Claridge, T. 2018). The structural social capital is the visible aspect of a network, it allows the analysis of the density, connectivity, hierarchy and ownership of the network of relationships in a given context such as a group, organization or community (Davenport and Daellenbach 2011). The important aspects of the structural social capital are the number of connections an actor has, with whom, and the strength of those connections (Taylor 2007; In Claridge, T. 2018).

2.1.2. The Cognitive Dimension of Social Capital

Păunescu, C., & Badea, M. R. (2014) define cognitive social capital as follows: "*the cumulus of assets providing shared and common meanings, interpretations, behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, norms and values among actors, such as legitimacy, safety, reciprocity*" (p.565). Cognitive social capital is the cognitive schemas and mental systems that allow connected members to develop a common vocabulary. Also, the cognitive aspect of social capital consists of the language, codes, and symbols that enable healthy communication between different people (Claridge, T. 2018). Contrary to structural social capital, cognitive social capital is difficult to be observed or analyzed.

2.1.3. The Relational Dimension of Social Capital

Relational social capital is the affective aspect of social capital that concerns the properties and qualities of personal relationships such as trust, engagement, respect, and friendship (Gooderham 2007; In Claridge, T. 2018). The relational component of social capital designates the type and quality of connections and relationships that have been developed along a continuum of interactions (Lefebvre & al. 2016) and is manifested through behavioral characteristics such as trustworthiness, group social norms, and responsibilities (Davenport and Daellenbach 2011; In Claridge, T. 2018).

In summary, social capital is a concept that remains little mobilized in the corporate finance literature. Indeed, we have deduced from our theoretical overview of this concept that it can provide relevant answers to problems concerning the financial behavior of companies, particularly SMEs. The literature on social capital shows that it has three main dimensions: the structural dimension, which concerns the structure of the network to which a firm belongs, notably its position within the network, the density of its relations with other actors, etc. The second dimension concerns the cognitive aspect of social capital. According to the literature, cognitive social capital consists of all the social norms, values, beliefs, etc. shared by the interconnected actors within a network. The third dimension of social capital is the relational dimension, which encompasses the affective aspects of relationships, such as trust, commitment and the quality of the relationship between the actors in the network in general.

Thus, in the following section we will focus on the financial behavior of SMEs so that we can analyze in the third section the contribution of social capital to SME financing.

2.2. Theoretical background on financing of SMEs

2.2.1. What is a SME?

Small and medium-sized enterprises are considered as the principal source of economic growth (Mouhallab, S. & Jianguo, W. 2016). Recently, SMEs attracted more attention from governments and political and economic actors due to their important role in the developing of the economy and the social climate. In literature, there are multiple definitions of SMEs. Rutashobya & Olomi (1999) affirm in their research that there were more than 50 definitions of SMEs concept (In Mouhallab, S. & Jianguo, W. 2016). However, many researchers and scientists tried to define SME without reaching a comprehensive universal definition that considers both legal and economic aspects (Makhroute & al., 2013).

ISSN: 2658-8455
Volume 2, Issue 6 (2021), pp.140-155.
www.ijafame.org

In fact, it is difficult to define what is a SME and that's because of the heterogeneity of the diverse criteria that could be considered in the definition which is principally financial, legal and economic criteria and that could be quantitative of qualitative criteria. Based on the nature of criteria, two different approaches emerge in order to define SME, the qualitative approach and the quantitative approach. The first one is based on socio-economic aspect of the organization which focus on human dimensions such as the behaviour of the owner, his management style, the contact between workers and managers, etc.

The qualitative approach highlights so many criteria that describe and characterize SMEs. However, these qualitative criteria are not enough to define precisely the SME and are not practical for conducting empirical studies on SMEs or for applying laws and taxes (Makhroute & al., 2013). Quantitative approach is based on a set of measurable criteria that quickly define a SME. The principle considered criteria are a number of employees, total revenues, capital, etc. Nonetheless, these criteria differ from one country to another (Makhroute & al., 2013). The table below shows the definition of SME in different countries based on one the number of employees as a quantitative criteria:

Table 2: *Definitions of SME by the criteria of the number of employees across countries*

Country	**SME definition (in function of the number of employees)**
European union, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland	1-249
Australia	0-199
Canada	0-499
Japan	1-249
United states	1-499
Turkey	1-249

Source: (*OECD, 2010; In Berisha, J. & Pula, J. S. 2015, p.20)*

Despite these quantitative definitions, Gibson and Vaart (2008) point out that we are still far from an international consensus on what defines exactly a SME and that this classification is not a scientific division based on specific macroeconomic indicators, but rather a statistical arbitrary (Berisha, J. & Pula, J. S. 2015).

2.2.2. Financial accompaniment of SMEs

SMEs' access to financial resources is difficult and that's justified by their characteristics which are essentially informality and opacity. In addition to that, SMEs present high levels of asymmetric information (Abdesamed, K, H, & Abd Wahab, K. 2014). Thus, financial actors (banks, financial companies, etc.) refuse the financing SMEs to avoid risk and adopt the credit rationing behaviour. Hachimi, A. & al., (2017) affirm that information asymmetry is a decisive factor in the financing relationship between SMEs and conventional banks in Morocco.

Abdelhafid, M. and Mohammed, S. (2019) presented in their work the conditions required for the efficiency of SME's credit market. The conditions underlined are firstly the free circulation of information, it means that information must be easily accessible to all economic agents in real time. Secondly, the diffused information must be useful and free of charge, agents mustn't support any cost to access this information. lastly, there mustn't be any transaction costs that can influence the actors' profits. Therefore, they argued that these conditions cannot be met in the SME loan market and that's because of the existence of transaction costs affirmed by (Kosekela, 1976), the existence of high costs of obtaining information (Christian P, 1995) and some economic agents possess more information than others (Sharpe, 1990).

In general, banks require information related to the performance of the SME in order to take it into consideration in the decision process of granting credit and to evaluate the investment envisaged by the SME. However, SMEs are not always able to communicate reliable and relevant information to banks. This constitutes an obstacle to the granting of credit by the bank to these SMEs. Several studies revealed that SMEs suffer more than large companies from credit rationing (Duan, H. & al., 2009). The principal reasons highlighted in the literature were related to SME's characteristics. SMEs are fragile and that's explained by their specificities (Hachimi A, & al., 2017). They present a high transaction cost (Duan, H. & al., 2009).

SMEs, compared to large companies, do not possess sufficient assets and do not present the necessary guarantees. Therefore, in order to reduce the level of risk, banks will not provide credit to SMEs if they cannot present an effective guarantee, even if they are optimistic about the growth of some of these SMEs (Duan, H. & al., 2009). In this context, manager's social capital could play an important role in providing SMEs financial resources. In our research, we retain the definition of financial accompaniment proposed by Gardes N. (2018) which consider that "*Financial accompaniment refers to the capacity of the capacity of the banking partner to support the company in its financial needs*" (P. 19).

In sum, these financially fragile enterprises (SMEs) are facing significant difficulties in their process of obtaining the necessary financial resources for their activity. Indeed, the literature shows that banks and financing companies most often adopt credit rationing behavior towards credit requests of SMEs. This behavior is theoretically justified by the informational asymmetry that characterizes the SME-bank relationship. Also, the guarantees that SMEs present are insufficient from the point of view of banking and credit institutions. Thus, the SMEs find serious financial difficulties that slow down their development. In this regard, the social capital can help these SMEs to overcome these difficulties and allow them to access the financial resources inherent to their social networks.

The following section will therefore focus on the potential contribution of social capital to the external financing of small and medium-sized enterprises.

2.3. Social capital contribution to the financial accompaniment of SMEs

Social capital theory assumes that the network allows its actors to access resources that are inherent in this network (Seibert & al., 2001). The fundamental proposition of social capital theory is that network ties provide access to resources (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). Indeed, Adler and Kwon (2002) consider that social capital is based on the principle that "Goodwill that others have toward us is a valuable resource". Researchers affirm thar firms must build and develop their social capital in order to operate effectively and to gain preferential access to resources embedded in the network including financial capital (Ahlstrom & Bruton, 2006; Ismail, Ford, Wu, & Peng, 2013; Nee, 1992; Wu & Chen, 2012; Xin & Pearce, 1996).

Jackowicz, K. & Kozłowski, L. (2019) conducted research in Poland that interested in the analyzing of the impact of social ties between SMEs managers and bank employees on SMEs' access to bank loans. They adopted a quantitative research methodology and they found out that manager's social capital facilitates SMEs' access to bank loan. This impact concern principally the amount of the loan and does not concern the lending terms. Therefore, results show that the positive impact of SME's social ties on financing access is conditioned by the involvement of bank's decision-makers in these ties (Jackowicz, K. & Kozłowski, L. 2019).

In the same vein, Talavera, O. & al., (2015) conducted a study in China that analyzed the impact of social capital on access to bank financing. The results of their research show that managers and entrepreneurs who contribute to charities are more likely to be approved for credit. Also, the results show that entrepreneurs' political party affiliation is a determinant of access to financing from state-owned banks. In summary, the researchers confirm that in order to obtain credit from banks, entrepreneurs must belong to a relevant social network (Talavera,

ISSN: 2658-8455
Volume 2, Issue 6 (2021), pp.140-155.
www.ijafame.org

O. & al., 2015). The existing literature on SMEs' social capital and their access to finance has shown evidence of a positive significative association (Talavera, O. & al., 2015).

The table below summarizes several research that was conducted in order to analyze the potential effect of social capital on firm's access to financial resources:

Table 3*:Empirical studies on the effect of social capital on firm's access to financial resources*

Title	Author and year of publication	Problematic and research objectives	Methodology	Findings
Effects of structural, relational and cognitive social capital on resource acquisition: a study of entrepreneurs residing in multiplying deprived areas/	Lee, R. & al. (2019)	the objective of this paper is to examine the effect of usage of structural, relational and cognitive social capital on resource acquisition by entrepreneurs in England	Authors adopted a quantitative methodology and mobilized the regression model based on data collected on a sample of 211 entrepreneurs	the findings demonstrate that structural, relational and cognitive social capital taken together influence positively the resource acquisition of entrepreneurs residing in multiply deprived areas
The Social Capital: An Explanatory Factor of Existing Divergence between a Company Indebted and a Business Not Indebted	Kraima, M. T. and Mighri, Z (2019)	investigating the role of entrepreneurs' SC in SME financing in Tunisia, the paper's main question is: "The extent to which the SC has the explanations of existing differences between a company indebted and a business not in debt?"	Authors adopted a quantitative methodology: they conducted a survey on a sample of 50 companies and they proceed to statistical tests (correlation tests) to analyze the relation between SC and financing of SMEs	They results show firstly a positive influence of the social capital of access to financial resources. Then, they affirm that SMEs that are in debt has more social links than firms not in debt. Thus, they suggested that social capital have a significative influence of financial structure of SMEs
Social capital and access to informal finance – evidence from Chinese private firms	Deng, L. & al., (2019)	Authors investigate how firms' social capital affects their access to informal finance	Quantitative methodology based on statistical tests to analyze the effect of SC on private firms' access to informal financing. Data	Results show that firm's SC is positively correlated with their ability to obtain informal financing. They find that the impact of social

			were collected from survey conducted by national institutions on Chinese private firms during the period between 2006 & 2012	capital on access to informal finance is moderated by the regional formal and informal institutions.
The International Effect of Managerial Social Capital on the Cost of Equity	Ferris, S. P., Javakhadze, D., & Rajkovic, T. (2016)	examination the effects of managerial social capital on a firm's cost of equity financing.	Authors adopted a quantitative methodology. They used a panel of companies from 52 countries for the period 1999-2012 and they used a regression model to analyze the relationship between the managerial social capital and the cost of equity	Results show a significant negative association between SC and the implied cost of equity. The inverse association between SC and the cost of equity is stronger in underdeveloped financial markets. They affirm that the marginal effect of SC on reducing the cost of equity is also stronger for financially constrained firms with profitable investment opportunities.

Social capital and access to bank credit for African SMEs: the case of Cameroon	Henri Wamba (2013)	The author attempt to determine the extent to which the social capital of the SME can alleviate, or at least replace, the real guarantee required by the bank. The study also examines the ability of social capital to facilitate access to bank credit for Cameroonian SMEs in an environment characterized by strong information asymmetries.	Author adopted a quantitative methodology to study the potential effect of SMEs' social capital on their access to financing, Thus the research was conducted on a sample of 413 SMEs. The researcher used a multinomial logit model to analyze the probability of firms accessing to bank loans.	Research has considered five variables as components of SMEs' social capital: the ratio of the family workforce, government support, membership in business networks or associations, personal relationships with the bank and the level of human capital predominant in the company. He found out that the only the last three variables have a significative positive effect on firm's access to bank financing. The most significative variable is the personal relationships with the bank.

Source: *Authors*

Extant literature on small firm social capital and firm access to financing revealed some evidence of positive statistical association (Talavera, O. & al., 2015; Jackowicz, K. & Kozłowski, L. 2019). Thus, we assume that:

H1: Social capital has a positive effect on the financial accompaniment of SMEs

In our research, we attempt to analyse the dimensional impact of social capital on SME's access to financial resources, thus, we are going to analyse the influence of each social capital's dimension on the financial accompaniment of SMEs.

2.3.1. Relational social capital and financial accompaniment

Relational social capital includes trust, social norms and values shared by set of actors (Obeitoh Ozigi, 2018). It embodies trust, reciprocity and obligations and expectations (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). This dimension of social capital allows to SMEs to establish and maintain solid associations with economic actors due to their shared values, history and friendship. In concern of financial accompaniment, Yan, Wenjia (2013) argued that trust facilitates access to capital (cited in Obeitoh Ozigi,2018).

Harhoff, D. & Korting, T. (1998) affirm in their paper that the Germans SMEs that build relationships based on mutual trust with their banks benefit from reduced costs, reduced interest rates and pledge less guarantees for their financing. Chen, D. & al, (2016) affirm that social trust plays an important role in the financing of non-state-owned enterprises in China, they suggested that social trust has a positive effect on non-state-owned enterprises' access to bank financing, especially when these companies are not politically connected and located in areas where the legal environment is poor and work with less reputable auditing firms. Their results show that trust plays an important role in the financing of firms that face more obstacles in the bank lending market.

Beside social trust, Kerr and Dyson (2016) affirm that the respect of others' expectations and the focus on commitment as component of structural social capital contribute to the reinforcing of entrepreneurs' social capital and their ability to access to external resources (In Lee, R. & al., 2019). Therefore, our research put forward the following hypothesis:

H1.a: Manager's relational social capital is positively associated to the financial accompaniment of SMEs

2.3.2. Structural social capital and financial accompaniment of SMEs

The structural social capital refers to the structure of the network, the interactions, the information flow, the information sharing and the honest communication (Obeitoh Ozigi,2018).

A firm's position in a network has a significant influence on resources' flows, amounts and diversity in this network. (Burt, 1992; Walker & al., 1997). Jonsson, S. and Lindbergh, J. (2011) consider that the structure of a network impacts the range of alternatives to funding and acquiring financial information from this network. Researchers affirm that the benefits from social capital depend on the connections and size of the network (Bourdieu, 1986; Burt, 1992; In Lee, R. & al., (2019)). It's admitted that entrepreneurs who develop large networks are in a better position to assess abundant resources and exploit potential opportunities more effectively (Besser and Miller, 2011; Liao and Welsch, 2005; Smith & al, 2017; In Lee, R. & al., (2019)).

H1.b: Manager's structural social capital has a positive impact on the financial accompaniment of SMEs

2.3.3. Cognitive social capital impact on financial accompaniment

Cognitive social capital refers to "those resources providing shared representations, interpretations, and systems of meaning among parties" (Cicourel, 1973; In Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). Shared languages, codes and narratives are its principal components. In fact; languages and codes play a crucial role in the establishment and the maintain of social relationships because it constitutes the means by which people communicate, share information and lead a business (Lee, R. & al., 2019).

The components of cognitive social capital facilitate people's ability build new relationships and to gain access to information (Lee, R. & al., 2019). Shared narrative facilitates entrepreneurs to build a personalized relationship with business partners (Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001; Navis and Glynn, 2011; Phillips & al, 2013). Therefore, Martens & al., (2007) affirm that narrative, anecdotes, and analogies enable business owners to obtain the resources and money they need to pursue identified market opportunities (In Lee, R. & al., 2019).

H1.c: Manager's cognitive social capital impact positively the financial accompaniment of SME

ISSN: 2658-8455
Volume 2, Issue 6 (2021), pp.140-155.
www.ijafame.org

The literature on the contribution of social capital to the external financing of SMEs shows, through several empirical works (Table 3), that there is clearly a significant positive relationship between the social capital of SMEs and their ease of access to financial resources. Thus, based on our literature review, we were able to assume the hypotheses of our research model, which we will present and discuss below.

3. Results and Discussions

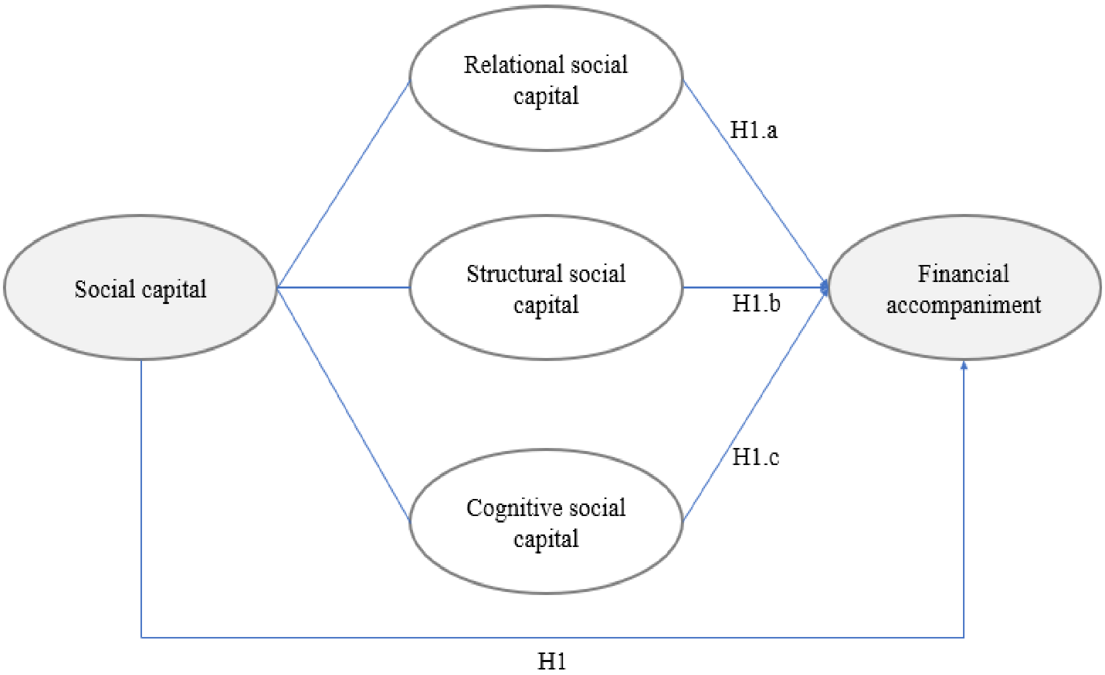
SMEs contribute considerably to the growth and development of both developed and developing economies (Makhroute, M. & al., 2013). However, this type of business faces several constraints in their development process. These are mainly financial constraints. Indeed, SMEs are characterized by a lack of transparency toward external stakeholders, particularly financial partners (banks, credit companies, etc.) (Abdesamed, K, H, & Abd Wahab, K. 2014). Thus, the relationship of SMEs with their banks is characterized by an informational asymmetry (Hachimi, A. & al., 2017). As a result, financial institutions adopt credit rationing behavior and increase their requirements with respect to financing requests submitted by SMEs (Duan, H. & al., 2009. Therefore, the social capital of SMEs 'managers can fill these gaps and allow SMEs to access resources. Indeed, the theoretical analysis allowed us to deduce that companies that manage to develop relevant social capital have easier access to external financing thanks to the relationships they maintain with financial partners (Jackowicz, K. & Kozłowski, L. 2019).

The extent literature allowed us to identify three dimensions of social capital which are relational, structural and cognitive dimensions. The relational dimension concerns the nature of the relations that an individual has developed with others (Granovetter, 1992 in Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998), while the structural dimension concerns the characteristics of the network to which an individual belongs, mainly the number of relations, the position of the individual in the network, etc. (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998). Finally, the cognitive dimension of social capital consists of everything that is beliefs, attitudes, norms, values, etc. shared by the members of a network (Păunescu, C., & Badea, M. R. 2014).

In this research, the results show that social capital through its three dimensions positively influences the financial accompaniment of SMEs. Thus, social capital is considered as an alternative for firms to address constraints in accessing external finance. This contribution relationship has been studied in the literature especially in the works of (Jackowicz, K. & Kozłowski, L. 2019; Ferris, S. P., Javakhadze, D., & Rajkovic, T. 2016; Kraima, M. T. and Mighri, Z. 2019, Talavera, O. & al., 2015).

The figure (1) below presents our research model which show the dimensional impact of social capital on the financial accompaniment of SMEs:

***Figure 1**: Research model*



Source: *Authors*

The tables below (4:5) present the definitions retained of the variables of our conceptual model and a summary of the model's hypotheses:

***Table 4:** Variable definition*

Variable	Definition	Source
Social capital	*"A sum of actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by individuals".*	(Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998. P. 243)
Relational Social Capital	*"The relational dimension concerns the kind of personal relationships people have developed with each other through a history of interactions"*	(Granovetter, 1992 In Nahapiet and Ghoshal. 1998. P. 244)
Structural social capital	*"Structural dimension concerns the properties of the social system and of the network of relations as a whole".*	(Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998.P. 244)
Cognitive social capital	*"The cumulus of assets providing shared and common meanings, interpretations, behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, norms and values among actors, such as legitimacy, safety, reciprocity".*	(Păunescu, C., & Badea, M. R. 2014, P.565)
Financial accompaniment	*"Financial accompaniment refers to the capacity of the banking partner to support the company in its financial needs"*	(Gardes N. 2018, P.19)

Source: *authors*

ISSN: 2658-8455
Volume 2, Issue 6 (2021), pp.140-155.
www.ijafame.org

Table 5: *Research hypotheses*

Hypothesis	Explanatory variable	Variable to be explained
H1: *Manager's social capital has a positive effect on financial accompaniment of SMEs*	Social capital	Financial accompaniment
H1.a: Manager's relational social capital is positively associated to the financial accompaniment of SMEs	Relational social capital	
H1.b: Manager's structural social capital has a positive impact on the financial accompaniment	Structural social capital	
H1.c: Manager's cognitive social capital impact positively the financial accompaniment of SME	Cognitive social capital	

Source: *authors*

4. Conclusion

The objective of this theoretical research was to investigate the contribution of social capital to the financial accompaniment of SMEs. Indeed, the literature suggests that social capital is a key element in enabling SMEs to overcome the difficulties they are facing in accessing external financing resources. In fact, the trust-based relationships that SMEs develop with their financial partners allow them to remedy to the problem of information asymmetry, which constitutes the main factor determining the credit rationing behavior adopted by banks and credit institutions. Thus, we have drawn out our conceptual model from the literature that we plan to test in future research. Our research model stipulates that the main three dimensions of social capital have a significant positive impact on the SMEs' ability to access to financial resources.

In this research, we based ourselves on the theory of social capital, which stipulates that social capital allow firms to access resources that are available in their social networks. The contributions of our research consist firstly in the mobilization of the concept of social capital in corporate finance research. In fact, social capital has received little attention in the disciplinary field of finance (Ferris, P. S. & al., 2016). Thus, our research enriches the literature on social capital and finance. Also, we analyzed the underlying factors of SMEs' financial behavior in terms of financing. Furthermore, we have established through our literature review a conceptual model showing the dimensional impact of social capital on the financial accompaniment of SMEs.

However, our research has its limitations, as with any scientific research. The main limitation is that we didn't mobilize financial theories in our theoretical framework. The second major limitation of our research is the limited number of previous empirical studies analyzed in our literature review.

Our research initiates a confirmatory empirical study to test our conceptual model in several contexts. From this perspective, we intend to follow this research path and provide empirical answers to the question of the contribution of social capital to the financing of SMEs in the Moroccan context, where SMEs suffer considerably from difficulties in accessing financing.

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